



When loved ones in the _____ _____ *Military are deployed*

With our busy and hectic lives, families are constantly in motion. As the day comes to a close, it is a time for families to regroup and enjoy their time together. Yet if your loved one is in the military, reconnecting with him or her may be a long time away.

When a loved one is being deployed, there are several stages of emotions that people may go through. Emotions can range from fear, anger, and abandonment to excitement, hope and satisfaction. Emotional stages that may occur during deployment are:

- **Confusion.** Up to six weeks after departure, people may feel abandonment, emptiness, pain, and disorganization.
- **Adjustment.** During most of the deployment period, feelings of hope, confidence, calm, and loneliness occur.
- **Pre-Homecoming.** About six to eight weeks before your loved one returns, it is normal to feel apprehensive, excited, and worried.
- **Reunion.** There are two levels involved - Honeymoon and Readjustment. During the Honeymoon stage feelings of euphoria, excitement, and confusion are likely to occur. Yet while readjusting to your loved one being home, you may feel discomfort and role confusion.¹

Communication while being deployed is important. It raises the morale for service members as well as loved ones left at home. By keeping each other abreast of changes regarding friendships, personal experiences, and goals, reunions with loved ones are a lot smoother. When communicating to loved ones in the military, letters may be the best way. Other ways to communicate are e-mails, lettergrams, and telephone calls. Different branches of service and ships allow different methods of communications, so it's wise to know beforehand which methods are available. Before sending letters or e-mails, be mindful of what they say. Some Do's and Don'ts are below:

Do

- Be open and free in regard to your feelings about things
- Give updates about relatives, friends, and neighbors
- Also send cards and postcards to give yourself a break from letter writing

¹ Retrieved from the World Wide Web on September 12, 2001: <http://members.tripod.com/~phisigsig/stages.html>

Don't

- Avoid answering questions
- Write about possible rumors or gossip
- Use phrases such as, "Things are falling apart" and "I can't handle it without you"

Remember that it is important to discuss communication plans prior to the service member leaving and to adhere to them. Both of you will be expecting correspondence and if letters stop coming, worry and fear could set in.

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healthy bodies
sound minds
a safe place to work

FOH

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A component of the U.S. Public Health Service
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